

Hakuna Matata

Story: Hakuna Matata

Storylink: <https://www.fanfiction.net/s/7812039/1/>

Category: Lion King

Genre: Adventure/Romance

Author: ThatPersonYouMightKnow

Authorlink: <https://www.fanfiction.net/u/3365186/>

Last updated: 02/11/2012

Words: 12379

Rating: T

Status: Complete

Content: Chapter 1 to 7 of 7 chapters

Source: FanFiction.net

Summary: Simba and Nala explore the jungle, where they encounter the friendly Timon and Pumbaa. However, the two cubs soon discover they are hiding a dark, terrifying secret...

Chapter 1: Chapter 1: Call of the Wild

AN: As I'm sure you lovely readers know, I don't exactly stick to the plot of *The Lion King*. At least, not entirely. I have my own little 'universe', if I can call it that. Well – and I'm not joking – has anyone actually thought of Timon and Pumbaa as *villains* in the actual movie? I mean, sure, they don't exactly try to control anything or kill anyone, but they seriously mess with Simba's mind, don't they? Essentially, they brainwash the poor kid into living like they do! Thank God Nala showed up when she did, otherwise I don't know *what* they would have done to him...

Anyway, this story will show Timon and Pumbaa in a completely different light. A way I don't think anyone's seen them before. It's pretty messed up, and it's pretty weird, but aren't all of my stories like that? So, without further ado, I present to you the latest story!

Hakuna Matata

Chapter One: Call of the Wild

Simba hated being bored. It was something he could do without. If there was one thing he wanted to ban when he became King then it was boredom. Just *saying* it made him feel bored. The word itself managed to numb his mind completely, erasing all traces of fun and enjoyment.

Unfortunately, boredom was what plagued Simba right now, as he lay in the corner of the den, tossing and turning this way and that, wondering what in the world he was going to do today. It wasn't even the afternoon yet, and he *already* felt like just giving up and going to sleep until tomorrow. He knew he wouldn't do that, though. Nala would never let him live it down.

"Come on, Mister There's-Lots-Of-Things-We-Can-Do," said Nala, rolling onto her back as she lay beside him. "Surely you can think of *one* thing to do today. Just one thing. That's all I'm asking." She frowned. "And can it get any hotter? Jeez, I feel like I'm going to melt to death!"

"I know," Simba agreed, giving a little nod. "But I can't think of anything! *Anything!* My brain has completely frozen! Since when do I run out of ideas? I'm Prince Simba! I *never* run out of ideas!" Simba groaned, his head sinking into his paws. "What's happened to me?"

"Well, you don't think this is something to do with the fact that we've lost three days of our lives?" she wondered, thinking back to a few days ago. For some reason, they'd woken up in the middle of a field, with no recollection as to why they were there, and how they had got there in the first place. It was really weird. The only thing they could really seem to remember was that they had been having a lot of fun...

Simba shrugged. "I don't know. Maybe we had so much fun during those three days that we wore ourselves out. What if we've been completely drained of all our fun?" he asked in a worried tone, nibbling on his claws nervously.

"I wouldn't go *that* far, Simba," said Nala, rolling her eyes and smiling. That cub certainly had an overactive imagination. "Nice idea, though. Got any more? Maybe we can tell each other stories? That would kill off some time."

"Nah. I was planning on doing that next week," he informed her. "I've got a story that'll scare you out of your fur!"

"About what?" Nala asked, narrowing her eyes at him. Simba knew how to tease her, and he was certainly good at it. She *hated* it when other people knew things that she didn't. What did he have planned for her...?

Simba grinned and tapped his nose repeatedly. "That's for me to know, and you to find out," he teased.

"Fine," said Nala, turning away from him. "I'll just wait until next week – because I just *love* it when people keep secrets from me," she said sarcastically.

Simba rolled his eyes. "Come on, Nala. It's a good story. You'll like it. The mood's not right. I'd rather tell it to you at night. It kinda loses its... scariness when it's the middle of the morning."

Nala rolled over so she was facing Simba again, a smile on her face. "Hey, I've just thought of something we can do!" she exclaimed enthusiastically, earning a surprised look from Simba.

"You have?" he said in a stunned tone. "I thought you looked to *me* for the ideas around here."

"You know, Simba, I do have a brain of my own," she told him. "I can think of things for myself."

"I was only kidding," Simba said in a singsong voice. "Now what's the idea? Or plan? Does it involve torturing Zazu with a long sharp stick?"

Nala's eyes went wide, disturbed. "Um... no. I was thinking we could go into the jungle, and, you know, explore. It's a lot better than sitting around out here melting to death. What do you think?"

"Yes," agreed Simba, nodding. "I would love to go into the jungle. But first, can we try my 'torturing Zazu with a long sharp stick' idea?"

Nala giggled and got to her paws, turning and heading out of the den. "You know, Simba, sometimes I wonder what goes on in that head of yours."

"I don't think I know," Simba admitted sheepishly, following her out. "I still think it might be a good idea..."

"I wonder if there are more of those caves out there?" Nala said as she stopped to admire the beautiful scenery of the Pride Lands. "You know, like that one we went into a while back."

"What, the one with all the traps that almost got us killed in?" Simba replied, narrowing his eyes. "The one that Hago sent us into so he could 'control the universe'? Whatever that means."

"Yeah," Nala said, turning to him. "I mean, we could find one that's a little less dangerous than *that* one, but sometimes getting into trouble is part of having fun, right?"

"Uh... I guess," Simba replied, scratching his head. "I didn't think you were exactly a fan of getting into trouble, though."

"Oh, Simba, we've gotten into more trouble than any other cubs in the world," Nala said, waving his comment away with a paw. "What's one little dangerous cave adventure going to change?"

"How many legs we have by the end of it?" Simba suggested half-heartedly.

"That's the spirit!" Nala exclaimed, turning to head down Pride Rock. "Besides, would you rather be stuck here?"

Simba looked back at the – empty – den, and then back at Nala. "I'm right behind you," he said, bounding after her. "Besides, what's the worst that can happen?"

"Yeah!" Nala exclaimed cheerfully. "Maybe we'll find something really cool!"

"Or something really dangerous," Simba said in a flat tone. "Which seems to be the most likely thing that will happen to us today."

"You worry a lot, don't you?" Nala asked.

"All the time," Simba admitted.

Chapter 2: Chapter 2: That Sinking Feeling

Chapter Two: That Sinking Feeling

"Simba!" Tama exclaimed angrily, growling loudly. "How I hate him so!" She then turned to Tojo, smiling sweetly. "But then how I love him! He makes my day every time I catch the tiniest glimpse of that golden-brown fur!"

"Okay, I knew you were insane, but now you're just... *crazy*!" Tojo exclaimed, his eyes wide. "So, let me get this straight: you hate Simba, but you love him at the same time?"

Tojo and Tama were stuck by the water hole, doing nothing in particular. They were just... talking. There wasn't really much else to do. To be honest, they both thought the situation was rather boring.

Tama nodded, grinning. "Uh-huh. He wrecks my plans, but still manages to warm my freezing cold heart." She smiled dreamily. "Wouldn't you feel the same way if you were me, Tojo?"

"I can't say, Tama," he replied. "Because I've never been a girl before. I don't understand the way you people... feel around boys," he admitted. "For example, by all rights I should run away from someone as crazy as you as fast as I can, but I hardly ever move from you! What sense does that make? My mind really is weird sometimes..."

"Tojo, you're *always* weird," Tama told him. "I don't even know why I keep you around sometimes."

"Maybe it's because there's some kind of invisible force drawing us together," Tojo suggested. "One that refuses to let us go our separate ways until we reach a certain conclusion."

"A fight to the death?" Tama concluded. "Because that would actually be quite fun! Here, I'll start off by chewing through your leg!"

"Whoa! Whoa! Whoa!" Tojo exclaimed, holding his front paws up for her to stop. "Don't get carried away, Tama! You need me for... whatever evil plot you've cooked up today."

Tama narrowed her eyes and smiled. "You know what, Tojo? You're absolutely right. Well done. I *have* thought up another scheme! One that's ten times better than that hypnosis plan from the other day!"

"Yeah," Tojo agreed, nodding. "Come to think of it, it was a bit stupid. Not to mention the trouble you caused when Simba and Nala realised that they'd forgotten three days of their lives."

"Yeah – but their parents just put that down to them getting hit too hard on the head," said Tama.

"What would they get hit on the head with?" Tojo asked, narrowing his eyes in confusion.

"Who cares? A coconut that fell from a tree or something. It doesn't matter to me. All that matters is the next mission!"

Tojo saluted at her. "Yes, ma'am! Permission to ask what the plan is?"

"Permission granted."

"What is the plan?"

"Well, Tojo, the plan is very simple: we're going to have a break," Tama revealed, causing Tojo's mouth to drop open in shock.

"Uh..." said Tojo, not really believing this. "Us? Break? Today? Right after we've failed at a plan which you thought would work one hundred per cent?"

Tama nodded. "I need to give my mind a rest," she explained. "And it's a Sunday, so it's the perfect time to have a break. We're going to go to a very special place today, Tojo!"

"And this 'special place' is..." Tojo asked, gesturing for Tama to go on.

Tama smiled, and put a paw around Tojo, hugging her close to him. "Tojo, my friend, have you ever heard of a place called... the beach?"

Tojo raised an eyebrow at her. "I can't say I have. Is it any good?"

"Oh, yes, Tojo. Yes, it is. My parents went on and on about the place all the time back in my old pride. It's a quiet, cosy,

peaceful little place located deep in the jungle. A whole place full of sand, sea and sun!"

"We have enough sun as it is," Tojo remarked, fanning himself with his paw. "I'm gonna get sunburn before the day is over. Why do we need more fun?"

"Because, Tojo, it's what all evil geniuses like myself like to do. They spend all day burning themselves in the sun just to get a bit of fun out of it. You'd like that, wouldn't you?" she asked.

"Not really," Tojo replied flatly.

"Great!" Tama exclaimed, pulling him away. "Let's go! I'm itching to get to that beach and soak up the sun!"

"I just hope that water's cold," Tojo said, "or there's not gonna be much left of me by the end of the day."

"You always spoil the fun, don't you, Tojo?" Tama said, frowning. "Can't you just enjoy yourself for once?"

"Not when I'm the partner of an egotistical maniac who tries to make a Prince her boyfriend," Tojo replied.

"Ego-what?" Tama said, confused.

"And you call yourself a genius?" Tojo laughed. "You have a lot more to learn than you think, Tama."

Tama stopped dead in her tracks. "Oh, Tojo?" she called in a sweet, soft tone, grinning.

"What is it?" Tojo asked, stopping beside her.

Tama put her paw on top of Tojo's head, and his eyes shrank down to small dots. "Shut up, and don't say another word until we get to the beach," she ordered.

"Yes, Tama," Tojo obeyed in a blank tone.

Tama smiled. "Good."

Simba gagged when he ended up almost swallowing a branch that had suddenly leapt out at him from a tall tree. "Jeez, it seems like everything out here is trying to kill us!" he complained as he shoved the thin branch aside, sticking his tongue out in disgust. Branches weren't exactly the tastiest food in the world.

"Well, maybe everything's out to kill *you*," said Nala, hopping over a low branch, "but nothing is trying to kill *me*."

"And why's that?" Simba asked. "Do the branches... not hit girls or something like that?"

"No," she replied. "It's just because I'm careful. You spend half the time looking down at the ground, Simba. Keep your head up, and maybe you'll stop hitting yourself in the face."

"And since when were you the exploring expert?" Simba teased.

"Hey, I got really bored when I was just a baby in my old pride," Nala replied. "I had to do *something* to pass the time, so I... err, explored a lot."

"So I take it you know *all* of the dangers?" Simba presumed. "All the things you should do, all the things you shouldn't do, and everything that can kill you, right?"

"Pretty much," Nala replied, nodding, before she stepped in something wet, and rather sticky. She looked down, and frowned. "I seem to have made a mistake, though."

"What do you mean?" Simba said, as he also stepped in the same wet, sticky substance.

"Simba, have you ever gotten that sinking feeling?" Nala asked in a worried tone.

"Uh... no," he replied. "Why?"

"Well, you're about to," Nala informed him. "Because we've just stepped in quicksand!"

AN: Oh, I love teasing you with cliffhangers, don't I? If only there was someone who could save our two favourite cubs from their impending doom! Wait...

Chapter 3: Chapter 3: Sudden Rescue

AN: Oh... I'm late, aren't I? I hate it when that happens. If only time went slower for me... But that just sounds ridiculous, doesn't it? Still, time for more of this 'unique' – as one lovely reviewer has called it – story.

Chapter Three: Sudden Rescue

Simba always got worried whenever he and Nala were thrust into sudden danger. There was always this... feeling deep in the pit of his stomach whenever he suspected that he was nearing death. This had been at its worst when Simba found himself fighting Hago for control of the Pride Lands. The battle itself was certainly frightening, yes – considering that he was only a cub, and a brave one at that – but it was what happened at the end that scared him the most.

It all ended with him dangling from the edge of Pride Rock, with Hago slowly dragging him to his impending doom. He, along with Hago, would be consumed by the fiery flames that burned below. Simba had never felt so scared before. Simba had never felt what it was like when you knew you were about to die prior to that, but he had now. It wasn't a feeling he wanted to experience ever again. *Ever.*

Simba didn't exactly *know* he was going to die, but he certainly had that sickening feeling in his stomach right now. Breathing heavily, he knew he had to take control of the situation, and had to save both himself and Nala. *Particularly* Nala. He wasn't going to let her die like that. Even if he had to sacrifice himself.

"Nala, don't worry," he assured her. "Everything is going to be okay. I promise. We've just gotta think carefully, and we'll get out safely!"

"Well, that's us done for, then!" Nala retorted, panic evident in her voice. She looked down at the quicksand they had trodden into, and her heavy breathing increased when she saw that her legs had nearly been entirely consumed by the substance! "Simba... I'm sinking faster!" she cried worriedly.

"The key is not to panic," Simba told her, as he saw that his legs had nearly disappeared, too. "But I think shouting for help might be a good idea! Help! *Help!*" Simba shouted at the top of his voice. All that could be heard was the chirping and tweeting of birds nesting in the trees of the jungle. The two cubs quickly realised that no one was coming to help.

"I don't think anyone's coming, Simba," said Nala, voicing her worst fears. She didn't want to die like this! *Who did?* This was a *horrible* way to die! Drowning in quicksand... *yuck!* She didn't want to meet a slimy end! "So we're going to have to find a way to get out of this ourselves!"

Simba looked around, hoping there was a branch or something he could grab on to in order to escape, but there wasn't anything. The nearest branch was a few feet back, and Simba knew there was no way he was going to be able to reach it. He was done for!

"I don't think there is a way," he said, beginning to tremble with fear. Simba watched as his chest disappeared under the quicksand. *Don't panic*, Simba told himself calmly, closing his eyes and trying to relax. *Don't panic.*

Simba couldn't help himself. He panicked. "That's it! I'm getting out of here!" Simba started to struggle, trying desperately to break free of the quicksand with all his might. However, all Simba managed to do was make things worse. He felt like he was starting to sink even *quicker* now!

"Any last words?" said Nala fearfully, as her body disappeared under the wet, sticky substance.

"Uh... I love you," Simba blurted out. It was the first thing that popped into his mind, and it was something he might as well say, considering he was going to die in just a few moments. All the dangerous situations he'd been put into, and *this* was how he was going to die? That just sounded embarrassing...

"Well, I was expecting that," Nala told him, managing a little smile. "I love you too, Simba. I would give you a kiss, but I can't exactly move – or feel – my legs."

"*A last minute rescue would be great right now!*" Simba yelled, his voice echoing through the jungle. No response.

"Anyone? No? *No one?* Fine," Simba grumbled. "Let us die out here. Don't blame me if you need *your* life saving today!"

"Jeez, kid, you talk a lot, don't ya?" said a voice from a few feet away. "Do you do this all the time, or is it just when you need saving from some jungle quicksand?"

"Aw, don't be like that, Timon," said another voice. "Those two cute little cubs are in serious trouble!"

"Huh?" Simba and Nala both exclaimed at the same time, turning their heads so they could see the new arrivals – who they *hoped* had come to save them.

It was a rather... odd pairing, Simba and Nala had to admit. They found themselves staring at a pale brown meerkat, with dark brown stripes, a cream chest, and a red patch of hair on the top of his head. Behind the meerkat was a reddish-coloured warthog, who had black hair running down his back, and large tusks.

Simba raised an eyebrow in disbelief, and then turned to Nala, nodding. "Yep, we've gone crazy. This quicksand is choking us so tight that we're starting to see things that aren't really there." He frowned. "I hate slow deaths."

"When have you ever died before?" Nala retorted, her eyes widening.

"Uh... dreams," he replied, shrugging. "Lots and lots of dreams – well, nightmares, actually. Looks like it's real this time, though."

"Hey, in case you haven't noticed, kid, we're actually trying to help," the meerkat informed Simba. "Or would you rather drown in that disgusting slop?"

"Uh... no," Simba responded, eyeing the meerkat with curiosity. The day had just gotten a little more interesting. Maybe Nala was right – they *had* found something cool!

"Then I suggest you try not to struggle while we free ya." The meerkat chuckled nervously. "It's not exactly pretty when people sink."

"How are you going to get us out, exactly?" Nala enquired, raising an eyebrow at the funny pair. "Please tell me you've done this kind of thing before."

"Ah, too many to count," said the meerkat, waving a hand in the air. "Trust us, we're experts at saving people. Pumbaa, get a branch," he instructed the warthog.

"Small, medium or large?" asked the warthog.

The meerkat slapped a hand to his face. "Oh, for the love of... Pumbaa, they're lion cubs! What do you think they look like, an elephant or something? A small branch will do just fine." The meerkat turned to Simba and Nala. "Ignore him. Good help is hard to find these days. I have a disgusting slop of my own I have to live with every day."

"One small branch, coming up!" the warthog exclaimed as he headbutted the nearest tree. A smallish branch broke off from the tree, and the warthog caught it in his tusks. He then tossed the branch to the meerkat, who held it out to Simba and Nala.

"Just bite on it," the meerkat told them, "and I'll pull ya out."

Simba bit down on the edge of the branch, and the meerkat began to pull with all of his might. Slowly, but surely, Simba began to emerge from the quicksand, being released from its sticky hold.

"These guys may be small, but they sure are heavy!" the meerkat groaned, straining to pull Simba out.

Finally, with one big *plop*! Simba was free from the quicksand, collapsing onto his back on the safety of hard ground.

"Um, could you get me out now, please?" asked Nala, looking down nervously. "I think my mouth's about to go under."

The meerkat held out the branch for Nala next. She bit down on the end, and was slowly pulled out of the quicksand, in exactly the same way as Simba. These guys had experience! Nala figured they must live in the jungle. They sounded like experts!

With a *plop*! Nala collapsed onto the ground next to Simba, breathing heavily. That was a pretty scary ordeal. If it wasn't for this remarkable pair, then she and Simba would be goners!

"Thanks," Simba told the meerkat and the warthog. They simply smiled in response.

"No problem," said the warthog. "It's our pleasure."

"So, who are you guys?" Nala asked, eager to get to know them. They seemed so strange. She couldn't help but love them!

"Timon," said the meerkat, shaking Nala by the paw. "How's it going? And this is Pumbaa," he said, pointing to the

warthog. "I'm the adorable one, as you can guess."

"I thought I was the adorable one?" said Pumbaa, looking rather offended.

"No, you're the fat, stupid one!" Timon exclaimed. He turned to Simba and Nala, smiling innocently. "And you guys must be... what? Refugees? Outcasts? Escapees? Come on, what's your story?"

Simba sighed. "It's a *long* story," he muttered.

"I'm Nala," Nala introduced herself, smiling. "And this is Simba. Or, *Prince* Simba, if you want to get technical about things."

Timon's eyes seemed to light up. "A Prince, eh? Prince of what?" he asked eagerly.

Simba raised his eyebrows cockily. He revelled in the chance to show off, and this was no exception. "Oh, just the Prince of the Pride Lands. And, of course, the future King."

"Future King, huh?" said Timon, putting a hand to his chin. "Boy, would you make the perfect friend. I have to hang around with Pumbaa here all day, and the only thing he's the King of is hideousness."

Chapter 4: Chapter 4: Not Truly Evil

Chapter Four: Not Truly Evil

"Well... it's real great to meet you," Simba told Timon and Pumbaa. His eyes darted left and right, scanning the jungle surroundings. "So... what do you guys do for fun around here?"

"And we *mean* fun," Nala added. "Because most times we go into the jungle, something bad happens."

"Like falling in quicksand," Timon said with a grin. "Boy, you outsiders don't get around much, huh? Any idiot can see a little quicksand in front of them."

"You'd be surprised," Simba remarked flatly, shooting a look at Nala. "And you said the key to jungle survival was to keep your head *up*?"

"Okay, so I made one mistake," Nala admitted. "But we're not dead! These two... guys saved us."

"We save a lot of people," said Timon. "Unless they're bugs, of course. We pretend to save them, and then, we eat 'em."

"Sick," said Nala, disgusted. "Who eats bugs? Who *wants* to eat bugs? Who *enjoys* eating bugs?"

"Us!" Timon exclaimed. "A slimy diet is a happy diet. That's our motto," he told the, resulting in a confused reaction from Pumbaa.

"I thought our motto was *hakuna matata*?" said Pumbaa, confused.

"Pumbaa, you know what I mean," replied Timon. "We've lived together for long enough. You know me well enough by now to know what I mean. Why *wouldn't* you know what I mean? Then again, with a brain like yours, it sure is possible."

"Back to my question," Simba chimed in. "Come on, what fun things are there to do around here? There must be *something*."

"Ah, it's not much," Timon replied. "All ya got is the dirt, the trees and the water. Paradise, if you ask me. I'm not a big thrills kind of guy. Right, Pumbaa, my old pal?"

"Um... I guess, Timon. But what about that time when we tried to—"

"Pumbaa, not in front of the kids," Timon interrupted, giving him a warning look. "It's a long story, and one I don't want to hear about ever again. Far too... *ugly*."

Simba sighed. "Great. So we came here all for nothing. Well, it was nice to meet you guys, but we really should be getting back. Right, Nala?" he said, winking at Nala as he turned to walk away.

"Yeah," said Nala, pretending to sound sad. "It sure is a shame we have to go. But there's just... nothing fun to do."

The two cubs slowly walked away, knowing full well what was going to happen. They knew just the right way to squeeze the secrets of the jungle from Timon and Pumbaa. They weren't going to give up and leave so easily.

"Hey, hey, hey!" Timon exclaimed, jumping in front of Simba and Nala, holding up his hands for them to stop. "Don't be so hasty! I'm sure there's something we can find for you two guys to do around here. We can show you a bit of our *hakuna matata* spirit."

"*Hakuna matata*?" said Simba, raising an eyebrow. "What does that even mean, anyway?"

"It means 'no worries'," Pumbaa informed them, smiling. "It's our problem-free philosophy."

"Nice. Rhymes," said Nala, smiling back. "You could make a song out of that sometime."

"There's an idea..." said Timon, impressed. "Maybe we'll save it for another time."

"Okay, so the beach is definitely this way," said Tama, as she brushed aside a branch that was obstructing her way. "I'm sure of it. Pretty sure. *Very* sure. Surer than sure."

"You've said that three times, now," Tojo told her, looking around. "And I still don't see this mystical substance called 'sand' you keep telling me about. What does it look like? What colour is it?"

"Yellow," replied Tama. "Sort of. Trust me, you'll know it when you see it." Tama hopped over a rock and continued on her way, crisscrossing through the many trees of the jungle.

"And what do we do when we get to this... 'beach'?" Tojo asked, thinking that it must be a pretty exciting place if Tama wanted to go there. She lived for that sort of thing. Either that or the beach was some sort of lion pride she wouldn't mind enslaving and becoming the Queen of. The way her mind worked was rather odd.

And he still couldn't figure out why he remained so close to her. There was this strange part of Tojo that... liked Tama. He really, really did. But she was such a... *ghastly* person. How could you like someone whose favourite things to do included torture and murder? Granted, he didn't think that Tama actually *had* murdered someone, but it wasn't something that he would put past her.

Still, Tojo was sure that Tama wasn't *entirely* bad. Surely, inside that evil body of hers, there was an ocean of goodness waiting to be found? She couldn't be one hundred per cent evil, could she? That was impossible. Tama was better than that. He was sure of it.

"We lay down, and soak up the sun," Tama replied. "That's all there is to it. Does everything have to be extremely complicated for you or something?"

"I'm just wondering, that's all," said Tojo. "Normally, there's some sort of evil purpose involved in every single thing you do. Mostly."

"You don't think I'm capable of doing something that *isn't* evil?" Tama asked, the tiniest trace of offence in her voice. It was so tiny that even Tojo didn't pick up on it.

Tojo sighed. "Oh, I don't know, Tama. *Are* you? Isn't there a little bit of good in you? Or do you think you're just a naturally evil person?"

"Naturally evil?" Tama laughed. "Oh, Tojo, you have *no* idea about what made me an evil person. I wasn't *born* evil, if that's what you're thinking. It's to do with something quite, quite different."

"And can you tell me?" Tojo asked, now very curious indeed. He always thought that evil was habitual, in Tama's case. She originally lived in a magical lion pride, and all of her family possessed magical powers. He thought that people like that were evil originally, but clearly this wasn't the case, as Tama had just revealed to him.

"Oh, I'll tell you sometime," Tama replied. "Maybe today, if you're a good little cub and don't annoy me like you did earlier. I was very generous to free you from my hypnotic hold. Don't make me grab you with it again."

"I'll try my best."

AN: Timon and Pumbaa sure are nice guys, aren't they? They don't want to take over the Pride Lands or anything. That just sounds stupid. Liking it so far? You might as well review...

Chapter 5: Chapter 5: The Jungle Oasis

AN: Grr... I hate it when I'm denied access to my account. This website is trying my patience. Anyway, anger aside, I've written two more chapters for you. Can Timon and Pumbaa be trusted? Sure they can! Unless, of course, you're reading *this* story...

Chapter Five: The Jungle Oasis

"Whoa..." Nala gasped in amazement at what she was seeing. "I don't think I've ever seen something so beautiful before," she added, attracting the attention of Simba, who was standing right beside her.

"Aren't you forgetting who's standing right next to you?" he said, raising an eyebrow, a tight smile on his face.

"Nope," she replied, smiling teasingly. "You're just not very beautiful."

Timon and Pumbaa had brought Simba and Nala to a certain section of the jungle – in fact, it happened to be directly in the centre of it. The location was what they called their home, and it truly was beautiful.

It was a jungle oasis that seemed to go on for miles and miles. Simba and Nala had never been this deep into the jungle before, and were surprised to find that this cool place was only a short walk away from where they'd originally been! How come they'd never stumbled upon this place before?

"Now *that's* what I call cool," said Simba, impressed. "And you guys live here?" he asked, turning to Timon and Pumbaa.

"Yep," replied Timon. "Been here for years. Feels like for ever. Not that we'd want to leave, of course. Who'd want to leave a place like this? Since we were the first to discover it, we named it 'Hakuna Matata'."

"Let me guess," Nala said, looking at them. "Because there are 'no worries' here?" She turned to Simba, smiling. "I'm catching on quick."

"You got it!" Timon exclaimed. "No worries! Not ever! If there were worries, then we wouldn't have named it Hakuna Matata."

"Is there anything fun to do around here?" Simba asked eagerly. This place was so beautiful... there *had* to be something fun to do somewhere around here! Finally, a bit of excitement for once! And this time, there weren't any evil bad guys out to spoil it for them!

"Depends on your definition of exciting," replied Timon. "The bug-eating contests we have can sometimes get *really* heated, if you know what I mean. Especially when it comes to long worms."

"Yeah," agreed Pumbaa. "We were *both* covered in slime by the end of that day. It took Timon more than an hour to wash it all off."

"As I'm sure you can tell by the smell, Pumbaa *didn't* wash it all off," said Timon, smiling at the two cubs. "He prefers to live like the way Mother Nature intended. I don't think he's had a bath for three years straight."

Simba and Nala shot a disgusted look at each other. "Eww..." they both exclaimed, sickened.

"I can see you guys prefer the hygienic side of things, so why don't you sit back and relax in our bubble bath?" Timon offered. "Just don't let Pumbaa in – you'll know he's there when there are a lot more bubbles."

Simba shrugged. "Okay. Let's see how much we can find in this place!" Simba raced off, only to realise a few moments later that no one was following him. He turned around, to see Timon, Pumbaa and Nala, who were fixed to their original spots.

"Uh... it's this way, kid," said Timon, pointing to the left. He then climbed up onto Pumbaa's back. "Come on, Pumbaa! To the bubble bath!"

Pumbaa sped off, surprising both Simba and Nala. "Hey! You could have waited for me!" Nala called, running after them.

Simba's face fell as he saw the three of them run off. "You could have waited for *me*," he muttered, before chasing after them.

"*This* is the beach?" said Tojo, disappointment evident in his voice. Tama had dragged him deep into the jungle, and it had taken them two hours – *two hours* – to make it to this spot, which Tama had assured him was 'so beautiful that it would make his eyes water'.

What he was staring at was just lots and lots of sand. Sand that seemed to stretch out for miles and miles and miles. *Does it go on for ever?* Tojo wondered, as he stared out into the distance. Just sand. Yippee.

Tojo turned his head to the side, and stared at the sea. That seemed to go on for ever, too. *I wonder what's beyond that?* he thought, staring hard to see if there was anything more beyond the sea. Of course, he couldn't see anything.

Sea, sand and sun. It was all there, just like Tama had described it to him, but none of it was overly impressive. It was just... okay. Nothing special. Just the beach. That's all it was. *This* was what Tama had gotten excited over? What a letdown.

"Yeah," said Tama, not picking up on the disappointment in Tojo's voice. "It's great, isn't it?"

"No," replied Tojo. "It's hot. Hotter than it is in the Pride Lands. But I suppose for you, that was the point."

"Got it in one," Tama said, flopping down onto her back, lying on the sand. "Lie down, Tojo," she instructed. "We'll be here for a good few hours or so."

Tojo groaned inwardly. *A few hours?* he moaned. *I can't stay here for a few hours! I'll die of boredom!*

Reluctantly, Tojo lay next to Tama, staring out at the sea. They were like that for a few moments, in complete silence. Finally, after what seemed like an eternity of silence, Tojo spoke up. "Well... this is fun."

"Yes, it is," said Tama, closing her eyes and taking all of the heat in. "Just sit back, relax, and soak up the sun. That's the point of the beach." Tama opened her eyes and stared out at the sea. "Hey, I've just thought of an idea!"

"We can go home?" Tojo guessed, a grin appearing on his face.

"No. I was thinking that this spot is really... romantic. I should bring Simba here sometime. In a place like this, he'd fall for me in a heartbeat," Tama said, smiling.

"You seem to forget the fact that he's in love with Nala," Tojo reminded her, causing her to become instantly angry at the mention of her name.

"Don't ever mention her name in my presence!" Tama ordered angrily. "Do that again and I'll rip your intestines out through your throat, and then shove them right up your—"

"I get the idea, Tama," Tojo interrupted. "Don't ever use the 'N' word."

"Good boy," said Tama, becoming suddenly very calm again. She closed her eyes again, and managed to relax. All her worries were melting away...

"Uh, Tama?" said Tojo, turning his head to look at her.

She opened one eye. "Yes, Tojo?"

"Um... are you going to tell me that story?" he asked nervously, not wanting to anger Tama again.

"Which story is that?" asked Tama. "Is it the one about the chicken and the orange, because that's a story I really don't want to—"

"No, no," Tojo interrupted, waving his paws in the air. "I mean about how you became... well, evil. You said you'd tell me if I was... good. And I *have* been good, right?"

Tama looked into his eyes, and sighed. "I suppose so. It's a long story, Tojo. I'd rather not tell it to you, but this part of me deep down says that I must."

"Is it the *good* part of you?" Tojo asked, his eyes narrowing.

"Don't be ridiculous, Tojo. There *isn't* a good part of me," Tama assured him. Tojo knew that wasn't true. *Everyone* had a little bit of good in them. "But I'll still tell you the story." Tama cleared her throat. "It began a long time ago, in a lion pride far, far away..."

"Warm!" Simba exclaimed, as he walked through the jungle with Nala, Timon and Pumbaa, having just been in Timon and Pumbaa's bubble bath. "The water was actually... *warm*!"

"What did I tell ya?" said Timon, as he lay on Pumbaa's back. "There's a lot of amazing things in this jungle. Of course, the bug-eating contest offer is still going, if you're interested."

"I think we'll pass on that one," replied Nala, still disgusted by the fact that they ate bugs. That was just... sick! She'd watched Simba eat a worm once, and it wasn't exactly the most pleasant thing she'd ever witnessed.

"A lot of people get used to it after a while," Pumbaa informed them.

"So... other people live here?" Simba asked curiously. "I thought it was just you guys?"

"Oh, it *is* just us guys," Timon assured them. Simba and Nala didn't pick up on the worry in his eyes. "Pumbaa's just saying that... people get used to eating bugs after a while. That not to say that... other people have lived here. That'd just be stupid. It has been, and always will be just me and Pumbaa. Unless, of course... you two want to stay?"

Chapter 6: Chapter 6: Nothing Else Matters

Chapter Six: Nothing Else Matters

"Stay?" Simba repeated, surprised that Timon and Pumbaa were making this kind of offer to him and Nala. He figured these guys were kind of... reclusive – meaning they preferred being all by themselves in their peaceful jungle home. "You want us to stay?"

"Hey, it gets lonely sometimes," replied Timon. "And you guys sure look like you know your stuff. We could be friends for ever! We can teach you – you can teach us. Get what I'm saying?"

"Um... kinda," Nala responded, shooting a quick unsure glance at Simba. "You want us to live with you?"

"Yep!" Timon exclaimed. "Me and Pumbaa can't keep going on like this for ever, living like outcasts all our lives."

"But I thought you said we *were* outcasts," said Pumbaa, a confused look on his face. "I thought you said we couldn't trust anyone, and that no one would ever understand us?"

"Pumbaa, that was a phase," Timon told him, before turning to Simba and Nala. "I went a bit cuckoo during my teenage years, but who doesn't, huh? We haven't talked to anyone in a long while, and you guys seem like *perfect* friends! There's not many people who'd like to hang around with a meerkat and a warthog. I particularly emphasise the warthog part."

"Well, we can't stay," said Nala. "You see, we already have a home and—"

A flicker of a smile appeared on both Timon and Pumbaa's faces, as they stared at Simba and Nala. "Come on," Timon interrupted, his eyes burning into Simba's. "You can trust us, can't you?"

Simba stared back into Timon's eyes, and then blinked. "Hmm..." he said thoughtfully, putting a paw to his chin.

Nala stared at Simba, shocked. Was he actually thinking this over? They couldn't stay here! They belonged in the Pride Lands! That was their home! Beautiful as it was, Nala knew she couldn't live here. "Simba, you're not actually thinking about this, are you?" she asked.

"Well... yeah," Simba replied, turning to Nala. "This is a pretty cool place. In fact, it's the coolest place I've ever seen! It's the most *beautiful* thing I've ever laid eyes on!" he exclaimed, his eyes glowing with excitement at the prospect of living here.

"What about me?" Nala cried. "I thought I was the most beautiful thing you've ever laid eyes on!"

"Yeah, yeah, whatever," Simba muttered in response, waving her away with a paw, before turning to Timon and Pumbaa. "I'll live with you!" he told the two, grinning.

"Simba, we *can't* live here," Nala told him firmly. "We already have a home! We can't just leave!"

"Why not?"

Being only a tiny cub, the world around Tama interested her in so many ways that she didn't even understand. All the bright colours and loud noises pleased her in a way she couldn't really explain. It was just so... wonderful to her. Everything was so beautiful.

Unfortunately, her parents didn't seem to think so. Tama's parents were really evil people. She didn't quite understand why, but she knew that they were horrible people. She didn't want to be like them. She wanted to be a nice person – a good person. A person who didn't like to burn people to death just for fun. She didn't want to take her life in an evil direction!

However, her parents did. Tama's father, Kifo, and her mother, Kutisha, wanted Tama to grow up to be just like them. She'd had five brothers to begin with, but they didn't live for very long. Three of them had been drowned for not taking a likening to their parents' evil ways, and the other two had died after a certain cannibalistic incident that Tama didn't like to think about. She was the only one left, and her parents knew that Tama was the only one who could carry on in their evil paw prints.

Tama thought she'd never ever become an evil person. The thought didn't even cross her mind. Evil was wrong. Good was great! That was the way she thought. Good all the way...

Until that day. That one, horrible day. The day when everything changed for Tama. Her outlook on life was seriously altered after that incident. The day when she accidentally let it all slip.

Tama was in her parents' den, doing nothing in particular. She was just lying in the corner on her back, thinking to herself. She was a very imaginative person. Sometimes, she would just lie on her back and think for hours about the world around her. Everything fascinated her so, so much.

The only other person in the den with Tama was her father, Kifo. Her mother had left to do one of her evil deeds, but her father had stayed. Tama forever regretted letting herself being alone with her father in the den.

Since Tama knew she wasn't going to grow up to be an evil person like her parents, she decided that she might as well tell her father that. Her parents had taught her a lot of evil skills, but she hadn't put any of them to use. She just wasn't evil. End of story. Her parents might as well give up. That was why Tama wanted to tell her father that she wanted to be good.

"Uh... Daddy?" Tama called sweetly.

"What is it, Tama?" Kifo grunted in response, not really interested in what her daughter had to say. He had more important things to think about – like murdering young orphans who had no home of their own.

"I just wanted to tell you that... uh... I don't want to be... evil," Tama told him.

Kifo's eyes widened. He didn't just hear that. That was just his imagination. Tama was going to be an evil person, like him and her mother. She was born for that purpose. To spread havoc and destruction. It was all she would be good for.

"What?" Kifo said, his eyes still widened in horror.

"I said I don't want to be evil," Tama repeated. "I want to be a good person. I don't like being bad."

She did say it, Kifo realised, horrified and angered by this sudden revelation. If his daughter didn't want to be evil, then he was going to have to make her evil. His father had taught him the same way, and his father before that.

Kifo could feel his claws digging into the ground, anger ravishing his body. "Tama..." he called in a normal tone, resulting in a sweet smile from her.

"Yes, Daddy?" replied Tama.

"Come here," her father instructed.

Tama obliged. Getting to her paws, Tama wandered over to her father. "What is it, Daddy?"

Tama wasn't quick enough to see her father's claws colliding with her face, slashing her and knocking her onto her back. She cried out in pain, putting a paw to her cheek. She could feel blood dripping from the deep cuts.

Before Tama had a chance to recover from the first slash, her father embedded his claws in Tama's stomach, causing her to scream at the top of her voice. He dug his claws deep into her, and Tama thought for the first time in her life that she was going to die.

Kifo removed his claws from Tama's stomach, and slashed her across the chest repeatedly. Tears began to stream from Tama's face, and she sobbed and cried as her father slashed her again and again, each new slash hurting more than the previous one.

Tama sobbed louder and louder. She tried to say something, but her voice got caught in her throat. All she could feel was pain. Nothing more. Just the pain. It hurt so much... She didn't think she could take much more.

Tama didn't know how long her father abused her for, but it did stop at some point. Kifo stopped slashing her, and pulled Tama's face up to his.

"I hope you've learned your lesson," he said, before pushing her face into the ground.

Tama watched as her father left the den, seething with rage. As her eyes slowly closed, and she slipped away into unconsciousness, Tama knew that she was never ever going to be good again...

Tojo was stunned upon hearing Tama's story. He never knew what had caused Tama to become evil prior to this, and now that he knew, he couldn't help but feel so, so sorry for her. The poor girl. She'd been put through so much, and he didn't even know!

"Tama..." Tojo said, barely managing to talk. He was *that* shocked. "I'm... sorry."

Tama shrugged in response, closing her eyes again. "It's no big deal," she said, sounding completely unaffected. "At least you know now, huh?"

"Why didn't you tell me before?" Tojo asked.

"I don't know," Tama replied. "There were more important things on my mind." Tama opened her eyes again and looked at Tojo. "Plus... I didn't want to make you worry. Because that's what you do. A lot." Tama closed her eyes again.

Tojo stared at Tama sympathetically, and decided to do something to comfort her – even if she didn't want to be comforted. He snuggled up to her, resting his head on hers.

Tama didn't seem to mind.

"Why not?" Nala repeated, her eyes widening in shock at what Simba had said. "Because we live in the *Pride Lands*, Simba! Or have you forgotten that? This place is cool and all, but you can't seriously expect us to *live* here!"

Simba shrugged. "I like it here. It's more fun than the Pride Lands," he told her. "There's a lot more to do than just sit around by the water hole all day."

"Simba, if you stay here, then who's going to become the King?" Nala asked, figuring that Simba wouldn't give up such an honour. Now he *had* to accept that they couldn't stay here!

"Ah, let someone else do it," Simba responded, uninterested in such trivial matters. Becoming King of the Pride Lands didn't matter now. It was irrelevant. All that mattered to him now was staying here. He never ever wanted to leave. He wanted to stay here for ever and ever with Timon and Pumbaa! "I don't care about the Pride Lands anymore."

"What about your Mom and Dad?" said Nala. "You'll break their hearts if you desert them like that!"

"They'll just have another cub and forget all about me," Simba replied, still sounding like he didn't care at all. "Nothing but staying here matters now. I never want to leave!"

"Don't / matter to you?" Nala asked, a saddened look appearing on her face.

Simba shrugged again. "Not really."

AN: Boy, Timon and Pumbaa are causing a lot of trouble. But why? That is the mystery, I'm afraid. You'll have to find out their true intentions in the final chapter, which will be heading your way tomorrow – unless this website decides to stop me from accessing my account again. Ugh...

Chapter 7: Chapter 7: No Worries

AN: Time for Timon and Pumbaa's secret to come out. Why does Simba suddenly want to stay? Can Nala snap him out of it? Am I deliberately stopping you from reading the chapter? I don't know, you tell me.

Chapter Seven: No Worries

"*What?*" Nala cried at the top of her voice. "How can you not care about me? Simba, you're not making any sense!"

"For the first time in my life, I've realised that I *am* making sense," replied Simba, looking around the jungle surroundings with wide eyes, as if he were in love with it. "My old life doesn't matter now. I'm going to make a new life in the jungle, with my new best friends, Timon and Pumbaa."

Nala narrowed her eyes in suspicion, and turned her head to look at Timon and Pumbaa, who were smiling innocently at her. "Don't look at me," said Timon, shrugging. "The kid's obviously gotten a bit *too* much into the jungle spirit. I didn't think it was this fun, huh, Pumbaa?"

"Maybe you should just stay for *one* night?" Pumbaa suggested. "So you can... um..."

"Trial run the place," Timon finished for him, smiling at Nala. "How about it, kid? You got nothing else better to do, right?"

"Well... uh, I don't know," said Nala, thinking about it. Simba wasn't going to leave easily, which meant that if Nala left the jungle, then she would most likely never see Simba again. However, if she stayed for a night, then maybe she could snap Simba out of this and they could both go home the next morning.

"Yes!" Simba exclaimed, hopping in front of Timon and grabbing him. "We'll do it! I'd *love* to! That's okay, isn't it?" He started to shake Timon rapidly. "*Isn't it?*"

"Yes, yes, yes!" Timon exclaimed, pulling himself away from Simba and stumbling about dizzily. "Pumbaa, help me out here! From the way I'm seeing things, there are six of him and one of me!"

Nala looked at Simba. "You're really excited about this, aren't you?"

"What was your first clue?" Simba retorted. "I can't wait to move in and stay here for the rest of my life!"

"Not if I can help it," said Nala, frowning. "I don't suppose you're going to change your mind by tomorrow morning, are you?"

Simba scoffed. "Yeah, right! There's nothing for me back at the Pride Lands. I can do so much here! Why are *you* staying, anyway? I thought you *wanted* to go back to your stupid home?"

"I'm staying because I need to look after you," Nala explained. "I'm not gonna leave you here all on your own with them. I'm don't trust those two."

"I'd trust them with my life!" Simba declared. "I trust Timon and Pumbaa more than I trust *you*, Nala. All you want to do is make me go back to my miserable old life! Some friend."

Nala rolled her eyes. "I don't get you, Simba. Why are you acting like this all of a sudden? It's not like you at all!"

"That was the *old* Simba you knew," he replied. "I'm the *new* Simba! The Simba who doesn't want to spend his whole life in some dumb old kingdom."

"We'll see," Nala challenged. "I bet by tomorrow morning you'll want to go right back home!"

"I doubt it," said Simba as he turned to Timon and Pumbaa. "So, where do we sleep?"

Timon turned to Simba and grinned. "You can sleep anywhere! It doesn't matter! *Hakuna matata!*" he exclaimed. "But we know the *perfect* spot to catch some rest! Just follow us!" He hopped onto Pumbaa's back. "Pumbaa! Charge!"

"Great!" Simba said, grinning back at him. He started walking off, and turned back to face Nala. "You coming, *Nala*, or is the jungle so bad that you don't even want to sleep here?"

Nala sighed and followed Simba. "It's not the jungle," she muttered quietly, looking at Timon and Pumbaa as they led the way. "It's *them*."

Tama had fallen asleep on the beach, and it wasn't until the evening that she woke up. Her eyes flickered open, and she let out a big yawn. "That was the best sleep I've ever had," she said, smiling happily. "It couldn't be better! Sun, sand, sea and... *Tojo*?"

Tama blinked several times to make sure she wasn't seeing things, and realised just why her sleep had been so happy and peaceful.

It was Tojo. He was snuggled up to her, and his head was resting on hers. He too had fallen asleep, but he hadn't woken up yet.

A flicker of a smile appeared on Tama's face at the sight of Tojo. "You silly little guy," she said, stroking the top of his head. "I guess I can't say you don't make me happy."

Tojo's eyes flickered open, and he yawned. He took one look at Tama, and his eyes widened in embarrassment. He could feel himself blushing. This was so awkward...

"Good morning, Tojo," Tama greeted him. "Or should I say, good evening." She looked across the sea, to see the sun, which was beginning to set. The sky had turned a bright orange, telling Tama that it wouldn't be long before night arrived. "Looks like we fell asleep."

"Looks like it," said Tojo, still feeling rather awkward. "So... do you want to go, or...?"

Tama sighed, and got to her paws. "Yeah. I think we've had our fair share of the sun." She helped Tojo to his paws, and smiled as she stared into his eyes. "And also, Tojo... thanks."

"What for?"

"I'll tell you some other time," Tama replied, before walking off. "Come on! We'd better get home before it gets dark!"

Tojo stood there, wondering what in the world Tama meant. After a few moments, he shrugged and decided to follow her. He'd find out what she meant. One of these days...

Timon and Pumbaa had led Simba and Nala through their jungle paradise for ten minutes, before they finally reached the opening to a cave. Simba looked rather excited to see it, while Nala eyed it with curiosity. She couldn't see inside the cave. It was really, really dark, making the interior impossible to make out. It was a mystery.

"Here!" Timon exclaimed, jumping down from Pumbaa's back and pointing excitedly at the cave entrance.

"This is the best place to sleep in the whole jungle!" Pumbaa told them, staring down at the two cubs. "Maybe even the world! You'll never find a better place to rest your rump!"

"Looks kinda... dark," said Nala, raising an eyebrow as she looked the cave over. Anything could be down there. Nala had no idea what would be waiting for her if she went inside.

Come to think of it, why *should* she even go inside? What was the point? Then it hit Nala. There *wasn't* a point. She was only tagging along to take care of Simba, and to try and snap him out of his sudden obsession with Timon and Pumbaa's home. Maybe she should get out of here...

She didn't really trust Timon and Pumbaa to begin with. They seemed so... weird. Nala thought that she and Simba were pretty weird cubs, but this was weird on a whole different level! What was it about them that made them so... freaky to her? She just couldn't figure it out.

"Ah, that's nothing," said Timon, walking towards the cave opening. "It's only dark so the moonlight can shine perfectly through the hole in the cave's ceiling. It really sets... the mood, if you know what I mean."

"So, how about it?" said Pumbaa. "Why don't you go inside and check it out? Afterwards, you might want to stay for the rest of your lives!"

"I'm going right in!" Simba declared, excitedly hurrying towards the cave entrance, only for Nala to grab him by the tail and yank him backwards, preventing him from going in.

"I don't know," said Nala, looking up at the warthog suspiciously. "How do I know I can trust you two?"

"You can't," replied Timon.

"Huh?"

Thwack!

"Oh..." Nala moaned as she awoke, rubbing her head. She could feel a little bump there, which meant she had been knocked out by something, or *someone*. "What happened?" she asked no one in particular, checking out her surroundings.

She seemed to have woken up inside the cave, but it didn't exactly look as dark as the entrance. A few flames attached to torches along the wall lit the cave, providing enough illumination for Nala to see everything.

Simba was lying next to her, also unconscious. Nala nudged him, and he groaned in response, waking up. "Don't worry, Nala, I'll catch the elephants later," he muttered, rolling over.

"Simba!" Nala shouted, nudging him harder. His eyes snapped open and he jumped to his paws, looking around frantically.

"What is it?" he asked, looking at Nala. "I was just having the strangest dream..." He looked around the cave, and his eyes narrowed in confusion. "Where are we?"

"I think we're in the cave," Nala replied. "The cave that you thought was so great."

"Yeah," said Simba, nodding. "I don't know what I was thinking. It was like I was being controlled."

"I think I know who it was," Nala told him. "It was Timon and Pumbaa. I'm sure of it."

An evil laugh echoed throughout the cave, as two figures stepped out of the darkness. Simba and Nala watched as Timon and Pumbaa walked into the centre of the cave, evil smiles on both their faces.

"Very clever, Nala," said Timon sinisterly. "But it's too late."

"What are you up to?" Simba asked, walking right up to the two and staring at them angrily. "And what did you do to me?"

"Ah, shut up, kid," Timon replied, as Pumbaa used one of his tusks to throw Simba into the air, sending him crashing into the cave wall.

He slid to the ground, moaning in pain. "I haven't felt that in a while," he remarked, laughing and wincing in pain at the same time.

Nala looked at Timon and Pumbaa, seething with rage. "You won't get away with this!" she shouted determinedly.

A wide, unpleasant grin spread across Timon's face. "We've been getting away with it for two hundred years," he said with a chuckle.

Nala gasped. "What are you... talking about?" she asked.

Pumbaa chuckled. "Hey, Timon, they don't know what we're talking about. Now *that's* funny!"

They both snickered and laughed. "Oh, aren't you children precious?" Timon said through laughter.

"So much for no worries," Nala remarked.

Timon laughed harder. "Don't tell me you actually believed that *hakuna matata* nonsense? It is kind of good, though, isn't it? *Really* convinces the kids."

"What do you mean?" Simba asked.

"Take a look for yourself," said Pumbaa, gesturing to the far end of the cave. The two moved aside so the two cubs could get a good look at the shocking sight that was there.

Skeletons. Or, to be more accurate, the skeletons of *cubs*. Dozens of them, all piled up in stacks and stacks of bones. *How many cubs have been down here?* Nala wondered, her eyes widening in horror. *Hundreds*, she concluded. *Hundreds of cubs, and they've all... died down here. What have these two been doing?*

"How did they... What have you done to them?" Nala demanded. Timon and Pumbaa got closer to the two cubs, evil smiles still on their faces. It was as if they had done this many times before. Nala assumed they probably had.

"The same thing we're going to do to you," Timon responded. "The same thing we've been doing for the past two hundred years."

"What?" asked Simba.

"You're not the first cubs we've brought here, if that's what you're thinking," Timon told them. "For years and years we've been luring cubs to this cave. At first it was pretty hard to get them to trust us, but eventually we worked out a method that make gullible cubs like you never want to leave."

"So you set this all up," concluded Simba angrily. "The quicksand, the whole *hakuna matata* thing, the jungle. It was all part of your plan."

"You got it!" Timon exclaimed, pointing at Simba. "Then all we had to do was hypnotise you and make you want to stay for ever. You fell for it easily, but your friend there was able to resist the hypnosis. We had to bring you here by force."

"But why?" Nala asked, wanting to know why they had been brought to this deep, dark cave with hundreds of cub skeletons. What did Timon and Pumbaa want to do to them?

"We're magical," Pumbaa explained. "We come from a place a long way away."

"A place where the normal rules of life don't exactly apply to us," Timon said. "We possess a certain ability that allows us to live for ever and ever. That is, if we can find the right people to use it on. We have the power to drain the life energy out of people, which in turn makes us live longer. As long as we have souls to drain, we're immortal."

Nala gasped, horrified, because now she knew what this evil duo planned to do to her and Simba. "You want to drain our energy," Nala realised. "So you can live longer."

"So we can live *for ever*," Timon added, grinning. "It's our yearly tradition. Every year, we drain the souls of two cubs. One for me, and one for Pumbaa. It has to be cubs. They have the youth, the innocence, the energy. We steal all of the life you could have had and use it for ourselves."

"You're sick," said Simba, disgusted. "How could you do such an evil thing?"

Timon shrugged. "Who cares? Evil makes the world go round. I wouldn't worry, though. You won't feel much... except for the most horrible pain you can ever imagine."

Timon and Pumbaa laughed evilly, as Simba and Nala stared into each other's eyes, powerless to do anything. They were trapped. There was nothing they could do.

Simba hugged Nala as tight as he could, clutching her to his chest. "I'm sorry," he told her. "I got us into this mess by wanting to stay."

"No, it's my fault," said Nala, hugging him back. "I wanted to go to the jungle in the first place. We wouldn't have come here if it wasn't for me."

"Boo hoo, kids, get over it," said Timon, as he and Pumbaa advanced towards the two cubs, eager to drain their souls so they could live another year. These two wouldn't be the first, and they certainly weren't going to be the last. Timon and Pumbaa were going to live for ever and ever, as long as there were plenty of cubs to go around. And by the way things had gone for them the past two hundred years, it certainly looked like there were. "Say goodbye to your souls, kids."

"I think we'll drain the girl, first," Pumbaa said, glaring menacingly at Nala.

"No, wait!" Nala cried. "You can't! You—"

Pumbaa roughly grabbed Nala by the shoulders, and as soon as he had her in his grip, she knew it was too late.

A dark green light began to surround Nala's outline, as she felt herself getting weaker and weaker. It was as if all of her energy was being instantly drained from her. No... it wasn't just her energy. It was *everything*. Her memories, her life, her *soul*. Everything was being sucked right out of her...

Simba looked on in horror as Pumbaa drained Nala's life energy. Her eyes flickered, and she shot a desperate look in Simba's direction. "Simba..." she rasped, as her body began to go limp.

"No!" Simba cried, as he made a desperate leap, grabbing Nala and wrenching her free from Pumbaa's grasp.

The two cubs tumbled on the ground, landing a few feet away from Timon and Pumbaa. Simba looked at Nala, and saw the dark green light fade away. She felt her strength returning to her, and Simba noticed she no longer looked weak.

Nala stared into his eyes, and smiled. "Thanks. I was beginning to feel crispy."

"You idiot!" Timon shouted at Pumbaa angrily. "You let her go!"

"It wasn't my fault!" Pumbaa argued.

Timon slapped a hand to his face. "Never mind, just get them back!"

Simba and Nala got to their paws in time to see Pumbaa lunging at them. They rolled out of their way, and Pumbaa crashed head-first into the cave wall.

Timon leaped at Simba, only for Simba to duck low, causing Timon to sail over him and crash into the opposite cave wall.

Simba and Nala were now stood in the centre of the cave. Timon and Pumbaa recovered from having their faces smashed into the wall, and turned around, their eyes burning with fury.

Simba and Nala shot each other a worried look, before Timon and Pumbaa leapt at the two cubs simultaneously.

The two cubs thought fast, and jumped out of the way. Timon and Pumbaa collided with each other, only to realise that they had a hold of each other's shoulders when they landed. That could only mean one thing...

"Uh-oh," Timon said, worried.

Simba and Nala hugged each other tightly, watching as both Timon and Pumbaa's outlines began to glow a dark green. They were draining each other's energy! The two watched as Timon and Pumbaa seemed to get weaker, and weaker, and weaker. They weren't gaining any energy – it was all just being drained!

The dark green light got brighter and brighter, until Timon and Pumbaa were no longer visible, and the light was so bright that Simba and Nala had to close their eyes as tight as they possibly could. The most awful cry of pain was heard from Timon and Pumbaa, until...

Silence.

Simba and Nala opened their eyes, and let go of each other, looking for any sign of Timon and Pumbaa.

They weren't there. All that remained of Timon and Pumbaa was a pile of bones on the ground. They were gone for ever, and their reign of terror was over.

Simba and Nala stared at the pile of bones on the ground. Simba looked at Nala, a tight smile on his face.

"*Hakuna matata*," he said.

"Simba! Nala! Just where have you two been?" Sarabi asked the two, shocked to see them back so late. They should have been back hours ago, not to mention the fact that they hadn't told anyone where they were going!

"It's a long story," Simba replied, looking rather exhausted. "A story that involves a meerkat, a warthog, and draining the souls of innocent cubs."

Simba and Nala walked past Sarabi and into the den. Sarabi watched them walk off, a shocked expression on her face. "Well... that shut me up."

"I can't believe that just happened," Nala said, flopping onto her back in the corner of the den. "I really can't. This has to be one of the strangest days I've ever had."

"I can't wait until tomorrow, then," Simba joked, chuckling.

They lay there in silence for a few moments. "Simba?"

"What is it, Nala?"

"Promise me that we'll never go into the jungle again," she said.

"I can't," he told her.

"Why not?"

"Because you know we will. We can't resist, can we? There's always something that makes us go there. Some adventure, or bad guy, or... I don't know. We'll never be able to stop going to a certain place altogether."

"Guess you're right," Nala said, snuggling up to Simba. "Who knows what we'll have to do tomorrow?"

"Something heroic," Simba said, staring into Nala's eyes and smiling. "With us, it's always the same thing."

The End

AN: Whoa. Did you expect that? The sweet Timon and Pumbaa were just greedy animals with a hunger for immortality. Who'd have thought? And for my next trick, it turns out Rafiki is an alien from Mars, who wants to use hallucinogenic drugs to make grown lions see their dead fathers in clouds. I think that might have made it into the final cut of the movie, though...

But you don't want to hear me ramble, do you? You want to hear about the next story! Well, look no further than the teaser below you. It's quite a good one. Nowhere near as shocking as this, but good, nonetheless. I'm sure I'll see you soon.

NEXT TIME: One night, Tama is bitten by a rabid bat, and is turned into a vampire, with a severe hunger for blood. It just so happens that the Pride Lands are nearby to satisfy all of her cravings...